

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as indicated hereafter.

Claims:

1. (Previously Presented) In a telecommunications system functionally interconnecting a service switching point, a service control point, and an intelligent network element, and the telecommunications system including a billing system functionally connected at least to the service control point for retrieval of billing messages, the billing system including telecommunications accounts for charging fees to subscribers with respect to telecommunications services provided to the subscribers, a method for using a communication to conduct a transaction with respect to a telecommunications account, comprising:

receiving the communication at the service switching point, the communication being associated with a calling line number associated with a first telecommunications account;

causing the service switching point to route the communication to the intelligent network element;

causing the intelligent network element to obtain a telecommunications account number and a transaction amount from the communication, the telecommunications account number corresponding to a second telecommunications account with respect to which the transaction is conducted in the billing system;

in response to obtaining the telecommunications account number and the transaction amount, causing the intelligent network element to provide the telecommunications account number, the transaction amount, and a calling line number associated with the second telecommunications account and the communication to the service control point;

in response to receipt of the telecommunications account number, the transaction amount, and the calling line number associated with the second telecommunications account, causing the service control point to make an assignment of the telecommunications account number, the transaction amount, and the calling line number associated with the second telecommunications account to a billing message for billing

telephone service usage with respect to the calling line number by reusing a plurality of fields in the billing message to hold at least the telecommunications account number, the transaction amount, and the calling line number; and

causing the billing system to retrieve the billing message from the service control point,

to note the assignment of the telecommunications account number, the transaction amount, and the calling line number associated with the second telecommunications account, and

based on the assignment, to conduct the transaction in the billing system with respect to the second telecommunications account associated with the telecommunications account number by crediting or debiting the telecommunications account by at least the transaction amount

2. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the transaction amount comprises a number of units or a dollar amount; and

wherein the billing system conducts the transaction by crediting or debiting the telecommunications account by at least the number of units or by at least the dollar amount.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the telecommunications account number comprises a different account number from a calling line number account corresponding to the calling line number associated with the communication received at the service switching point; and

wherein the billing system conducts the transaction in the billing system by crediting or debiting the calling line number account by at least the transaction amount.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein prior to causing the service control point to make the assignment of the telecommunications account number, the transaction amount, and the calling line number, the method further comprising causing the service control point to carry out a validation whose result comprises a determination that the calling line number is authorized with respect to conduct of the transaction.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 4, wherein the intelligent network element obtains a personal identification number (PIN) from the communication, and wherein the validation comprises comparing the PIN for correspondence to a stored PIN associated with the calling line number.

6. (Original) The method of Claim 4, wherein the validation comprises comparing the telecommunication account number for correspondence to a stored telecommunications account number associated with the calling line number.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
causing the service control point to provide a confirmation regarding the conduct of the transaction to the intelligent network element; and
in response to receipt of the confirmation, causing the intelligent network element to provide an announcement to the communication.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Canceled)

10. (Previously Presented) A method for executing a transaction with respect to an account, comprising:

receiving a communication on a calling line associated with a calling line number;

obtaining an account number and a transaction amount from the communication, the account number corresponding to an account with respect to which a transaction is to be conducted, the account associated with a recipient other than a subscriber associated with a calling line number account associated with the calling line number;

creating a billing message for billing telephone service usage with respect to the calling line number;

reusing a plurality of fields in the billing message to hold elements of transaction information, the transaction information including the account number, the transaction amount, and the calling line number; and

using the account number and the transaction amount from the billing message to execute the transaction with respect to the account corresponding to the account number.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 10, wherein the communication is directed to a special access code.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 10, wherein the transaction amount comprises a number of units or a dollar amount; and

wherein the account number, and the number of units or the dollar amount, are used to execute the transaction by crediting the account by at least one number of units or by at least the dollar amount and by debiting the calling line number account by at least the number of units or by at least the dollar amount.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 10, further comprising:
charging the calling line number account associated with the calling line number a fee for the transaction.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 10, further comprising:
providing the communication with an announcement regarding the transaction.

15. (Original) The method of Claim 10, wherein prior to obtaining the account number and the transaction amount from the communication, the method further comprises making a validation whose result comprises a determination that the calling line number is authorized with respect to conduct of the transaction.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 15, wherein the validation comprises obtaining a personal identification number (PIN) from the communication, and checking that the PIN corresponds to a stored PIN associated with the calling line number.

17. (Original) The method of Claim 15, wherein the validation comprises comparing the account number for correspondence to a stored account number associated with the calling line number.

18. (Previously Presented) In a system for billing fees to subscribers for provision of telecommunication services, each subscriber having a telecommunications account in the system, the telecommunications account being associated with at least one calling line number, a method to conduct a transaction with respect to a telecommunications account in the system, comprising:

obtaining a billing message generated as a result of a telecommunications service performed with respect to a calling line number, wherein at least one field of the billing message for billing telephone service usage with respect to the calling line number are reused to hold transaction information;

in response to obtaining of the billing message, making a determination that the billing message includes an indication that a transaction is conducted with respect to a telecommunications account in the system, the telecommunications account associated with a recipient other than the subscriber associated with a calling line number account associated with the calling line number; and

in response to the determination, conducting the transaction with respect to the telecommunications account.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 18, wherein conducting the transaction with respect to the telecommunications account comprises crediting the telecommunications account by at least a number of units or a dollar amount, and/or debiting a different telecommunications account by at least the number of units and/or by at least the dollar amount, the different telecommunications account being associated with the calling line number receiving the telecommunications service that generated the billing message.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 18, wherein the indication comprises the transaction information; and

wherein conducting the transaction comprises using the transaction information with respect to the telecommunications account.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 20, wherein the transaction information comprises a number of units and/or a dollar amount; and

wherein conducting the transaction comprises using the number of units and/or the dollar amount with respect to the telecommunications account.

22. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 18, further comprising:
generating an invoice for the telecommunications account, the invoice indicating conduct of the transaction with respect to the telecommunications account.

23. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 22, wherein the invoice further indicates a message relating to the transaction conducted with respect to the telecommunications account.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 22, further comprising:
generating a different invoice for the different telecommunications account, the different invoice indicating the conduct of the transaction with respect to the telecommunications account.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 24, wherein the different invoice further indicates a different message relating to the transaction conducted with respect to the telecommunications account.

26. (Previously Presented) In a telecommunications system wherein a billing message is created with respect to a communication, wherein the billing message is further created with respect to a calling line number account corresponding to a calling line number associated with the communication, and wherein the billing message is obtained by a billing system having access to the calling line number account and to other accounts, a method for execution of a transaction in the billing system between the calling line number account and one of the other accounts to which the billing system has access, comprising:

providing that the billing message includes an indication for the execution of the transaction, wherein the indication is contained in at least one field of the billing message that is reused to contain transaction information;

causing the billing system to make a recognition of the indication in the billing message; and

in response to an indication in the billing message, causing the billing system to execute the transaction between the calling line number account associated with a subscriber and the one of the other accounts associated with a recipient other than the subscriber.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 26, wherein causing the billing system to execute the transaction comprises crediting the one of the other accounts by at least a number of units or a dollar amount, and/or debiting the calling line number account by at least the number of units and/or by at least the dollar amount.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 27, wherein causing the billing system to execute the transaction comprises debiting the calling line number account by a service fee for the transaction.

29. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 26, wherein the billing system executes the transaction between the calling line number account and the one of the other accounts by using the transaction information.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 26, further comprising:
causing the billing system to generate an invoice for the one of the other accounts, the invoice indicating execution of the transaction with respect to the one of the other accounts.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 30, wherein the invoice further indicates a message relating to the transaction conducted with respect to the one of the other accounts.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 30, further comprising:
generating a different invoice for the calling line number account, the different invoice indicating the execution of the transaction with respect to the one of the other accounts.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 32, wherein the different invoice further indicates a different message relating to the transaction conducted with respect to the one of the other accounts.

34. (Previously Presented) In a telecommunications system functionally interconnecting a service switching point, a service control point, and an intelligent network element, and the telecommunications system including a billing system functionally connected at least to the service control point for retrieval of billing messages, the billing system including accounts for conducting transactions, a method for using a communication to conduct a transaction with respect to an account, comprising:

receiving the communication at the service switching point, the communication being associated with a calling line number;

causing the service switching point to obtain instructions regarding the communication from a service control point;

based on the instructions from the service control point, causing the service switching point to obtain an account number and a transaction amount from the communication, the account number corresponding to an account with respect to which the transaction is to be conducted in the billing system, the account associated with a recipient other than a subscriber associated with a calling line number account associated with the calling line number;

in response to obtaining the account number and the transaction amount, causing the service switching point to provide the account number, the transaction amount, and the calling line number associated with the communication to the service control point;

in response to receipt of the account number, the transaction amount, and the calling line number, causing the service control point to make an assignment of the account number, the transaction amount, and the calling line number to a billing message for billing telephone service usage with respect to the calling line number by reusing a plurality of fields in the billing message to hold elements of transaction information, the transaction information including the account number, the transaction amount, and the calling line number in the billing message and by posting the billing message for obtaining the billing system; and

causing the billing system to retrieve the billing message from the service control point,

to note the assignment of the account number, the transaction amount, and the calling line number to the billing message, and based on the assignment, to conduct the transaction in the billing system with respect to the account associated with the account number by crediting or debiting the account by at least the transaction amount.

35. (Previously Presented) A method for executing a transaction, comprising:
receiving the communication associated with a calling line number;
obtaining a transaction amount from the communication;
coding the transaction amount and the calling line number into a billing message for billing telephone service usage with respect to the calling line number by reusing at least one field of the billing message to hold transaction information;
posting the billing message;
obtaining the billing message, and decoding the transaction amount and the calling line number from the billing message; and
crediting or debiting an account by the transaction amount, the account associated with a recipient other than a subscriber associated with the calling line number.

36. (Previously Presented) A system for allowing a user to initiate a transaction and have the transaction conducted, comprising:

a service switching point (SSP)

for receiving a communication from the user, and

for obtaining and acting on instructions regarding the communication;

a service control point (SCP)

for providing the instructions regarding the communication to the SSP, the instructions instructing the SSP to retrieve transaction information and to forward the transaction information to the SCP,

for including the transaction information in a billing message for billing telephone network service usage to the user by assigning the transaction information to at least a field of the billing message by reusing the at least a field of the billing message, and

for posting the billing message for retrieval by a billing system; and the billing system

for retrieving the billing message,

for recognizing the transaction information in the billing message, and

based on the recognition, for conducting the transaction

based on the transaction information, wherein the SCP is operative to code the transaction amount into a field of the billing message and the account number into another field of the billing message, and wherein the billing system is operative to decode the transaction amount from the field of the billing message and account number from the another field, and to credit or debit an account by the transaction amount, the account associated with a recipient other than the user.

37. (Canceled).

38. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1, wherein the billing message is a Structure Code 223, Automatic Messaging Accounting (AMA) billing record.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the billing message is a Structure Code 223, Automatic Messaging Accounting (AMA) billing record.

40. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 18, wherein the billing message is a Structure Code 223, Automatic Messaging Accounting (AMA) billing record.

41. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 18, wherein the transaction is a voting transaction.

42. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 18, wherein the transaction is a registration transaction.

43. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 18, wherein the transaction is a voucher transaction.

44. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 26, wherein the billing message is a Structure Code 223, Automatic Messaging Accounting (AMA) billing record.

45. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 26, wherein the transaction is a voting transaction.

46. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 26, wherein the transaction is a registration transaction.

47. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 26, wherein the transaction is a voucher transaction.

48. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 34, wherein the billing message is a Structure Code 223, Automatic Messaging Accounting (AMA) billing record.

49. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, wherein the billing message is a Structure Code 223, Automatic Messaging Accounting (AMA) billing record.

50. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 36, wherein the billing message is a Structure Code 223, Automatic Messaging Accounting (AMA) billing record.

51. (New) The system of claim 1, wherein the plurality of fields in the billing message are designed for holding information for billing telephone service usage, and wherein the telecommunications system reuses the plurality of fields to hold transaction information that is not pertinent for billing telephone service usage.

52. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein the plurality of fields in the billing message are designed for holding information for billing telephone service usage, and wherein the plurality of fields are reused to hold transaction information that is not pertinent for billing telephone service usage.

53. (New) The method of claim 18, wherein the plurality of fields in the billing message are designed for holding information for billing telephone service usage, and wherein the plurality of fields are reused in the obtaining step to hold transaction information that is not pertinent for billing telephone service usage.

54. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein the at least one field of the billing message is designed for holding information for billing telephone service usage, and wherein the at least one field is reused in the providing step to hold transaction information that is not pertinent for billing telephone service usage.

55. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein the plurality of fields in the billing message are designed for holding information for billing telephone service usage, and wherein the plurality of fields are reused in the causing step to hold transaction information that is not pertinent for billing telephone service usage.

56. (New) The method of claim 35, wherein the at least one field of the billing message is designed for holding information for billing telephone service usage, and wherein the at least one field is reused in the coding step to hold transaction information that is not pertinent for billing telephone service usage.

57. (New) The system of claim 36, wherein the fields of the billing message are designed for holding information for billing telephone service usage, and wherein the system reuses at least one field to hold transaction information that is not pertinent for billing telephone service usage.